

Message Text

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TAGS: OVIP (KISSINGER, HENRY A.)

SUBJ: EUROPEAN CHIEFS OF MISSION MEETING: ASSESSMENT OF U.S.-NATO
RELATIONS

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1. NATO REMAINS A VALUABLE INSTRUMENT OF U.S. FOREIGN POLICY.
HOWEVER, THE PHRASE U.S.-NATO RELATIONS IS REALLY NOT APPLICABLE,
HOWEVER IN THE SENSE THAT THE U.S. IS WITHIN NATO. AND, THAT FACT IS
THE BASIS OF THE CLAIM OF U.S. PARTNERSHIP WITH EUROPE.

2. SOME PROBLEMS EXIST: EUROPE IS OBVIOUSLY MORE ASSERTIVE TODAY;
THE "GOOD OLD DAYS" WHEN THE U.S. MADE THE IMPORTANT DECISIONS AND
SIMPLY ANNOUNCED THEM IN WASHINGTON ARE GONE. WATERGATE AND RECENT
SENATE AMENDMENTS HAVE BEEN UNSETTLING AND MAKE SOME WONDER IF THE
EXECUTIVE BRANCH CAN IN FACT DELIVER ON ITS POLICY INITIATIVES. THERE
IS AN APPREHENSION BY THE SMALL OF BIG POWER POLITICS BY THE FEW,
AND A SENSE OF ISOLATION BY THE NON-NINE MEMBERS OF NATO. RECENT
ARTICLES ON THE SALT NEGOTIATION HAVE RAISED THE QUESTION THAT,
EVEN IF U.S. REPRESENTATIVES ARE TRUTHFUL, DO THEY KNOW WHAT IS
REALLY GOING ON.

3. THERE ARE SOME DISTINCT PLUSES: THE END OF THE VIETNAM WAR, A
PERFECT RECORD ON SALT CONSULTATION, A UNIFORMLY WELL RECEIVED U.S.
MBFR PAPER, AND DESPITE THE DELAY IN RESPONDING, THE APRIL 23 SPEECH,
SALT, CSCE, AND MBFR OCONSULTATIONS, TO THE SURPRISE OF MANY, HAVE
ENHANCED THE POLITICAL COHESION OF THE ALLIANCE. ALLIES ON BOTH
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SIDES OF THE ATLANTIC HAVE REASON TO TAKE HEART FROM THE FACT THAT
EAST-WEST NEGOTIATIONS ARE PROGRESSING WITHOUT HAVING RUPTURED THE
POLITICAL-MILITARY-ECONOMIC RELATIONSHIPS THAT EVOLVED OVER 20 YEARS.

4. ON SHORT-RUN PROBLEMS, NATO IS IN ACCEPTABLE SHAPE AND WORKS REASONABLY WELL, PARTICULARLY TO THE EXTENT U.S. PROVIDES TIMELY AND COHERENT LEADERSHIP. INDEED, NATO IS FUNCTIONING TODAY AT A RELATIVELY FAST PACE, ON A WIDE RANGE OF COMPLEX SUBJECTS, AND WITH SURPRISINGLY FEW GLICHES. IN ADDITION TO THE TRADITIONAL ACTIVITIES, NATO IS WRESTLING WITH SEVERAL INTERSECTING U.S. INITIATIVES: (1) ATLANTIC RELATIONS, (2) MULTILATERAL BURDEN SHARING, (3) CONVENTIONAL FORCE IMPROVEMENTS, AND (4) MBFR, HAVING JUST SUCCESSFULLY COMPLETED THE DEVELOPMENT AND HARMONIZATION OF THE ALLIED NEGOTIATING APPROACH. THE UNITED STATES REMAINS ABLE, WHEN WE EFFECTIVELY USE THE MACHINERY AND ALLOW FOR COMMUNICATION AND EDUCATION, TO ACHIEVE MOST OF WHAT WE DESIRE. WHEN THE U.S. AND OUR ALLIES ARE WORKING OFF THE SAME SET OF FACTS, WHICH IS NOT ALWAYS THE CASE BECAUSE MUCH INFORMATION IS CLOSELY HELD, WE GENERALLY COME TO SIMILAR CONCLUSIONS. THE ALLIANCE MAY BE "TROUBLED," IN THE SENSE THERE WILL ALWAYS BE TENSIONS, BUT IT REMAINS "A BARGAIN." IT IS THE ONLY FORUM WHERE THE U.S. CAN GLIMPSE AT FIRST HAND THE POLITICAL INTERACTION AMONG EUROPEAN STATES, ANALYZE THEIR DIFFERING PERCEPTIONS AND SEIZE ON THOSE DIFFERENCES TO ACHIEVE A CONSENSUS, ON MATTERS OF SUBSTANCE, THAT IS TO THE NATIONAL ADVANTAGE OF THE U.S.

5. MEMBERSHIP IN NATO GIVES US CONTINUOUS ACCESS TO FOURTEEN NATIONS ON A FULL RANGE OF SUBJECTS. AS IN A "FAMILY," THERE ARE BONDS, BUT ALSO TENSIONS, THE LATTER OFTEN MORE APPARENT. WHAT OVERCOMES THE DIFFICULTIES ARE THE PERIODIC REMINDERS OF THE COMMUNITY OF INTERESTS. THE NATO RELATIONSHIP IS BASED ON A SHARED INTEREST IN SECURITY, WHICH CONTRIBUTES TO STABILITY BOTH EAST-WEST AND WEST-WEST. THE RECENT FRENCH DRAFT DECLARATION IS ONLY THE MOST RECENT EVIDENCE THAT MEMBERS RECOGNIZE THEY DEPEND ON EACH OTHER AND THE U.S. FOR THEIR SECURITY. THE FACT THAT SMALLER NATION MEMBERS ALSO VALUE NATO BECAUSE IT GIVES THEM A VOICE IN DECISIONS THEY WOULD OTHERWISE NOT SHARE IN, AND LARGER NATIONS BECAUSE THEY CAN TRUST EACH OTHER AND BE TRUSTED MORE FOR BEING CONTAINED IN AND BY IT, AND THE NON-NINE NATO MEMBERS BECAUSE IT INCREASES THEIR SCOPE OF ACTIVITY, SERVES TO ENHANCE NATO'S USEFULNESS AS AN INSTRUMENT IN U.S. POLICY.

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6. AS NATO HAS EVOLVED FROM A PURELY MILITARY ALLIANCE, A DIPLOMACY HAS EVOLVED IN WHICH CONSULTATION IS THE MAJOR ELEMENT. AS IN DEALING WITH THE CONGRESS, IT REQUIRES A TOLERANCE OF DELAYS AND SOME UNTIDINESS, PERCEPTIVENESS OF THE REAL INTERESTS OF OTHERS AND CONSIDERATION OF THEIR VIEWPOINTS. LIKE A MUSCLE, WE CANNOT EXPECT IT TO BE STRONG AND READY WHEN NEEDED, IF IT IS ALLOWED TO ATROPHY. IT OFFERS FEW DRAMATIC OPPORTUNITIES FOR BIG VICTORIES. WHILE CONSENSUS SEEKING WITH POPULARLY BASED GOVERNMENTS MAY SEEM CUBERSOME, THE MULTILATERAL CONSULTATION PROCESS IS A MOST VALUABLE BYPRODUCT OF THE ALLIANCE. IT EDUCATES, IT ESTABLISHES ACCEPTABLE PATTERNS OF CONDUCT; IT SUFFUSES ALL NATO ACTIVITIES WITH A SENSE OF SHARED INTERESTS AND SHARED GOALS. IT OFFERS THE BENEFIT THAT WHEN AN AGREED POSITION IS ACHIEVED, AS IN MBFR, IT IS

AN AGREEMENT THAT STICKS, THE DIFFERENCES HAVING BEEN WELL THRASHED OUT. THE U.S. MILITARY CONTRIBUTION GIVES THE U.S. AN ADVANTAGE IN NATO DELIBERATIONS NOT ALWAYS PRESENT IN BILATERAL DEALINGS. THE U.S. STRATEGIC DETERRENT IS THE UNSPOKEN FACT OF EVERY NATO DISCUSSION. THIS ADVANTAGE IS ALSO A RESPONSIBILITY, IN THAT OTHERS FEEL SO DEPENDENT ON THE U.S. THAT THEY ARE THEREFORE ULTRA-SENSITIVE TO ANYTHING WHICH MAY BE INTERPRETED AS A CHANGE IN U.S. POLICY.

7. MANY ALLIES, HOWEVER, ARE UNCERTAIN OVER THE LONGER-TERM PROSPECTS, FOR TWO PRINCIPAL AND RELATED REASONS. FIRST IS THE PROBLEM OF MAINTAINING PUBLIC SUPPORT FOR DEFENSE SPENDING DURING A PERIOD OF HIGHLY DRAMATIZED DETENTE AND THE RESULTING EUPHORIA. THE SECOND IS THE QUESTION: AS AN ALLY, HOW RELIABLE IS THE U.S.? THE CHIEF UNCERTAINTY HAS TO DO WITH THE STATUS OF THE U.S. COMMITMENT. TAKING INTO ACCOUNT NPT, THE U.S.-SOVIET AGREEMENT ON PREVENTION OF NUCLEAR WAR, THE EMPHASIS ON A CONVENTIONAL OPTION, A CALL FOR A RATIONAL DEFENSE PLAN, REPORTED U.S. MINI-NUKE STUDIES, MBFR, AND THE SENATE'S THREAT OF TROOP REDUCTIONS, SEVERAL ALLIES HAVE BEGUN TO ASK HARD QUESTIONS ABOUT THE NUCLEAR LINK. ALSO, AT LEAST ONE SENIOR ALLIED MILITARY OFFICIAL HAS CONCLUDED THAT THE WITHDRAWAL OF THE U.S. ARMED FORCES FROM THE CONTINENT IS ONLY A MATTER OF TIME. UNDER THE PRESENT ARRANGEMENT, THE FATE OF THE FOURTEEN IS IN U.S. HANDS. CAN A RELIABLE U.S. LONGER RANGE COMMITMENT TO THEIR DEFENSE BE GIVEN AND CAN IT BE SUSTAINED? CAN EUROPEAN POLITICAL LEADERS RISK CAREERS SUPPORTING U.S. POLICIES

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WHICH MAY CHANGE, THUS CUTTING THE GROUND FROM UNDER THEM?

8. THE U.S., AS SOMETHING OF A FATHER TO POSTWAR EUROPE, FACES THE PROBLEM OF MAINTAINING GOOD RELATIONS WITH A SON WHO IS MILITARILY AN INFANT, POLITICALLY GROWING, ECONOMICALLY GROWN, AND FEELS SOMEWHAT FEISTY, BUT STILL NEEDS TO ASK TO BORROW THE CAR. THE U.S. NEEDS THE PATIENCE TO COMMUNICATE AND CONSULT MORE AS ITS PREEMINENCE IS LESS. HOW DO WE SEE THE U.S.-EUROPEAN RELATIONSHIP TODAY, TOMORROW? WILL THE U.S. BE PART OF THE FIFTEEN, WITH THE NINE CO-OPERATING HARMONIOUSLY AS ON CSCE, AND THE U.S. PERHAPS STILL THE SENIOR PARTNER? OR, FOR EXAMPLE, IS IT TO BE THE NINE, WITH A HYPHENATED U.S. RELATIONSHIP, AS THEY BEHAVED IN RESPONDING TO THE APRIL 23 SPEECH, SEEMINGLY MORE INTERESTED IN THE IDENTITY OF THE NINE THAN IN STRENGTHENING THE PARTNERSHIP OF THE FIFTEEN? UNCERTAINTY ABOUT WHAT THE U.S. INTENDS DURING THE NEXT DECADE, AND HOW WE INTEND TO MAKE THIS NEW RELATIONSHIP MANIFEST TO PUBLICS AND PARLIAMENTS IS NOT THE ONLY PROBLEM OF NATO, BUT IT IS THE MAJOR ONE.

9. AS A PROMINENT LECTURER ONCE SAID, "THE BIGGEST CHALLENGE WE HAVE, IN RELATION TO NATO, IS WHETHER IT IS POSSIBLE TO DEVELOP A MORE CONCEPTUAL APPROACH (AND, A STEADINESS OF PURPOSE)...THE KIND OF ATLANTIC RELATIONSHIP WE ARE GOING TO BUILD DEPENDS CRUCIALLY ON

THE IDEAS WE CAN FORM OF IT TODAY." RUMSFELD

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